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EPA National Approach to Response Crisis Communications Plan

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U.S. EPA National Approach to Response Crisis Communications Plan

1.0 Introduction

During a nationally significant incident communication of environmental information is essential in helping the public. Consistent with the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Response Framework (NRF), if an actual or potential high-impact event requires robust coordination of the federal response in order to save lives, minimize damage, and help with long-term community and economic recovery, this Crisis Communication Plan may be put into effect at the request of the Associate Administrator for the Office of Public Affairs of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The information provided during a nationally significant incident must be understandable, timely, accurate and consistent. During such an incident, requests for information from the public and the media, as well as from the White House and state, tribal and trust territory officials, start immediately and continue throughout the response. To successfully meet these demands, the responsibilities of those gathering, organizing and releasing this information must be clearly identified and coordinated through a well-defined dissemination process. This Crisis Communication Plan establishes this process.

1.1 Purpose and Scope

This Plan establishes EPA's process for communicating environmental information to the public and coordinating public information among EPA field operations, regional offices and headquarters during a response to a nationally significant incident. The Plan identifies the roles and responsibilities of EPA communication personnel. However, various program offices will be involved in reviewing communications materials (i.e., Office of Emergency Management, Office of General Counsel, Office of Research and Development and other offices as appropriate).

This Plan is the public affairs component of EPA's National Approach to Response policy and supports EPA's efforts under the NRF when EPA is designated as a lead or support agency. The Plan is built upon the principles and concepts of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the planning assumptions and considerations of the NRF and the National Contingency Plan.

1.2 Applicability

During a nationally significant incident, this Plan may be activated by the Associate Administrator of Public Affairs. This Plan applies to all EPA offices, programs and facilities, with the exception of the Office of the Inspector General, and to all EPA PIOs serving in incident management structures such as Incident Command Posts, Joint Field Offices, Regional Emergency Operations Centers and Headquarters Emergency Operations Center.

This Plan is effective immediately and will remain in effect until revised or rescinded by the Associate Administrator for the Office of Public Affairs.

1.3 Review

The Deputy Associate Administrator for the Office of Public Affairs will review the Plan in coordination with OEM in accordance with the procedures set forth by the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) within the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) to ensure consistency with the NIMS and the NRF to account for policy, management, and operational changes. Request for changes must be directed to the DAA OPA. The DAA OPA will work in

coordination with the co-chairs of the Crisis Communications Workgroup on any requested changes to this document.

2.0 Concept of Operations

When the President of the United States issues a Major Disaster Declaration or the Administrator of EPA determines that an incident is nationally significant and necessitates the activation of this Crisis Communication Plan, EPA will retain full responsibility for its crisis communication programs and policies related to its activities. EPA will implement an organized, integrated, and coordinated response to ensure the delivery of understandable, timely, accurate, and consistent information to the public in a nationally significant incident. EPA will work within the NIMS Incident Command System structure, recognizing that Public Information Officers hold Command Staff positions on the Incident Management Team. EPA will contribute to the overall unified message of the response and support external affairs activities based on the Emergency Support Function ESF-15 Annex of the NRF, including providing staff and other support to the Joint Information Center (JIC), if requested.

EPA will provide the public with the widest practical and appropriate dissemination of information concerning its activities. EPA will work with federal, state, local, tribal, trust territory and other unified command partners to coordinate on development and release of all materials, including validated analytical data, Web content and press releases. EPA will work with our partners to ensure an integrated distribution of this information.

The headquarters Office of Public Affairs (HQ OPA) and the public affairs staff in regional offices have primary responsibility for managing the EPA public affairs function during nationally significant incidents. This Plan recognizes the Public Affairs Director (PAD) from the affected region as working in close coordination with and on behalf of the Regional Administrator. Public information officers will be deployed to the Joint Information Center, the HQs Emergency Operations Center, the Regional Emergency Operations Center, and the field level (located at the Incident Command). Upon activation of this Plan, all PIOs that are deployed to respond shall be fully trained and appointed by the AA OPA and/or the PAD.

3.0 Organizational Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Leadership Cadre

The Leadership Cadre, as described in ESF-15, includes the key functions for federal external affairs. EPA's Leadership Cadre (AA OPA, DAA OPA, Assistant Associate Administrator for OPA, Regional Public Affairs Directors (PADs) in the areas affected, HQs EOC PIO, Field PIO and EPA's ESF-15 representative to DHS) is responsible for ensuring the coordination of communication between field, regional, national response and HQ-level incident management structures. The Leadership Cadre also ensures that all communication with the public is understandable, timely, accurate and consistent. EPA's Leadership Cadre will execute its communication roles and responsibilities in accordance with this Plan.

3.1.1 Associate Administrator of the Office of Public Affairs

The AA OPA represents and advises the Administrator on all public information matters related to the management of the incident or disaster and serves as the focal point for crisis communications policy issues. The AA OPA may delegate certain responsibilities to the DAA OPA or other senior OPA personnel as needed.

The AA OPA will:

- Serve on the Policy Coordinating Committee. The PCC is convened during a nationally significant incident by the Administrator to exchange information about the incident and address significant Agency and inter-agency policy issues;
- Serve as the Administrator's representative to the White House and other Cabinet-level public affairs officials;
- Serve as the Administrator's representative to regional PADs and PIOs at all levels of the response;
- Serve on and coordinate with the Leadership Cadre throughout the incident;
- Establish an incident-specific process to be used for the public release of EPA information pertaining to the incident. This process is referred to throughout the Plan as the "review, approve, release" process.
- Coordinate the development of EPA messages;
- Approve communication products, including press releases, talking points and internal EPA employee communication, i.e., e.s. mass mailers to employees;
- Designate a representative to act as EPA's ESF-15 representative to DHS;
- Designate a qualified OPA representative to be a member of the National Incident Coordination Team. The NICT, chaired by the National Incident Coordinator, is a standing team of senior representatives from each HQ office. During an incident the NICT includes a representative from the affected region. During a response, the NICT coordinates resources, resolves issues, and keeps the PCC fully informed;
- Coordinate with OEM to designate qualified PIOs to work in the HQ EOC;
- Coordinate with the PAD and Field PIO and National Incident Coordinator to designate spokespeople for media inquiries.

3.1.2 Deputy Associate Administrator of the Office of Public Affairs

The DAA OPA represents and advises the AA OPA on all public information matters relating to the management of the incident. The DAA OPA serves as the Headquarters lead for day-to-day crisis communication issues, and in coordination with the EPA ESF-15 Representative to DHS, PAD and the HQ EOC PIO.

The DAA OPA will:

- Provide support and counsel to the AA OPA on public affairs matters;
- Serve on the Leadership Cadre or delegate responsibility to AAA OPA; and
- Oversee the "review, approve, release" process during the incident. This process may be modified throughout the incident as necessary.

3.1.3 EPA ESF-15 Representative to DHS

The ESF-15 Representative to DHS will serve at the National Joint Information Center or the Joint Field Office and will work to ensure that EPA's public information and messaging is accurately and appropriately integrated into the overall national information coordination effort. The ESF-15 Representative will:

- Be appointed by the AA OPA and serves on the Leadership Cadre.
- Serve in a leadership role on behalf of EPA in all National Incident Communications Conference Line calls during the response. (DHS operates these calls, which are designated as executive calls.

They are held at least once a day after an incident to exchange and transmit up-to-date information between federal and affected state, local and tribal authorities);

- Provide situational awareness to the Leadership Cadre of all public information efforts related to the overall response at the National Level and ESF-15 (i.e., the JIC, NICCL calls, and joint media events, etc.).

3.1.4 Headquarters Emergency Operations Center PIO (EOC PIO)

The HQ EOC PIO is part of the Leadership Cadre and is appointed by the AA OPA in consultation with OEM and serves as the OPA crisis communication liaison to the HQ EOC.

The HQ EOC PIO will:

- Coordinate with the Incident Coordinator in the EOC and other staff, such as the Liaison Officer;
- Serve as primary coordination point in the EOC for OPA leadership. Coordinates all materials for release from Field PIO to the AA OPA and works with the Office of General Counsel, represented by an attorney assigned to the HQ EOC, to review materials;
- Coordinate with the HQ EOC Environmental Unit regarding data and their release including the preparation of summaries of environmental sampling results, advisories, and statements on environmental data and related topics, coordinating with and seeking input from the REOC PIO and the PAD;
- Ensure that materials are written in language easily understood by the general public; and
- Coordinate approval and release of data-related materials using the established “review, approve, release” process.

3.1.5 Regional Public Affairs Director

The PAD advises and carries out the direction of the RA on all public information matters relating to the management of the incident. In close coordination with AA and DAA OPA, the PAD serves as the crisis communication lead for the affected region(s).

The PAD will:

- Serve as the RA’s representative to the Leadership Cadre;
- Develop for the AA OPA’s approval, in coordination with the RA and the Incident Management Teams PIO, all communication strategies and messages for the incident;
- Ensure products developed at the regional level go through the “review, approve and release” process and keeps the RA and Regional Counsel apprised of the status of products being processed;
- Coordinate the release of information in response to requests from HQ, affected states, tribes, territories, local public officials and the public;
- Provide public affairs resources to the Field PIO as needed;
- Recommend to the RA, in consultation with the AA OPA, who should serve as the Field PIO during various stages of the incident. If the PAD and the AA OPA determine that the PAD will serve as the Field PIO, the PAD will designate a PIO in the Region to coordinate from the regional office, including requesting public affairs support from another region. Subsequent rotations of individuals serving as Field PIO will typically be other PADs or other EPA public affairs staff with appropriate training and experience;
- Assess the need for additional resource support requirements for the response. During responses that exhaust regional office resources, additional resources will first be requested from their backup region(s), as defined on existing backup region Memoranda of Agreement (MOA), before pursuing resources from other regions. Requests and coordination will be made through the

REOCs. Where there are multiple simultaneous incidents, or a significant precedent setting incident, the HQ EOC may coordinate these requests through the NICT with the REOCs and the Regional Incident Command Teams (RICTs).

- Keep the AA and DAA OPA fully informed of public and media inquiries.

3.1.6 Incident Command Public Information Officer

The Field PIO represents and advises the Incident Commander on all public information matters related to the management of the incident. The PAD will appoint the PIO in consultation with the AA OPA. The Field PIO provides operational support to the IC and coordinates with the Leadership Cadre. The PIO handles media and public inquiries, emergency public information and warnings, rumor monitoring and response, media monitoring, and disseminates accurate, concise and timely information related to the incident, particularly regarding information on public health and protection. The Field PIO is also responsible for coordinating public information at or near the incident site and serving as the on-scene link to the Joint Information Center. Field PIOs should refer to EPA's Incident Management Handbook for full explanation of their responsibilities under ICS.

The Field PIO will:

- Serve as the IC's representative to the Leadership Cadre and public affairs personnel staffing the JIC;
- Attend Command and General Staff meeting and Planning meeting;
- Brief the IC or designated field personnel to ensure the accurate release of information to the public and media;
- Apprise the Leadership Cadre of any forthcoming announcements or major developments;
- Provide the EPA JIC Assistant PIO(s) with current information about EPA response activities and assist in review/approval of information requests;
- Working in coordination with the Leadership Cadre and public affairs personnel at the JIC, develops communication products such as risk communication templates, press releases and flyers for the IC's approval and distribution;
- Ensure products developed at the field level go through the "review, approve, release" process and coordinate the process with the IC;
- Keep the PAD updated on the need for resources to support public affairs activities and assign assistant PIOs as necessary (through the HQ EOC resource request systems);
- Advise the PAD of emerging issues and provide guidance to address these issues;
- Provide a communication summary at the end of each day to the Leadership Cadre on the activities for that day and on expected activities for the next day;
- Ensure coordination of information approval and release during the incident; and
- Ensure all public affairs materials are archived and documented.

3.2 Regional Emergency Operations Center Public Information Officer

The REOC supports and coordinates the Agency's tactical response in the field. The PAD appoints the REOC PIO, who serves as the crisis communication liaison to the REOC.

The REOC PIO will:

- Coordinate with the REOC Manager and the REOC and HQ Environmental Units on data and its release using the established "review, approve and release" process; and

- Work with the REOC and HQ Environmental Units to prepare summaries of environmental sampling results, advisories, and statements on environmental data and related topics, coordinating with and seeking input from the PAD and HQ EOC PIO.

4.0 Message Development and Distribution

4.1 Disseminating Information to the Public

When this Plan is put into effect, EPA will:

- Ensure that all information dissemination is coordinated with the DHS JIC as described under ESF-15 as required by the event (Leadership Cadre);
- Ensure that messages are conveyed to the public quickly, accurately and consistently by working with print and broadcast media and posting information on the Web;
- Work with partner agencies at the federal, state, local and tribal levels, as well as private sector and non-governmental organizations when appropriate, on development of public health and environmental information;
- Develop and maintain resources to assist public affairs personnel in their designated roles;
- Convene the Leadership Cadre to begin the communication strategy process (AA OPA, DAA OPA);
- Develop and disseminate the incident specific “review, approve, release” process for communications materials (DAA OPA);
- Develop the strategy for on-going operations and product distribution, including Agency-specific products and joint products developed under ESF-15 (Leadership Cadre);
- Review and approve national messages in coordination with the Leadership Cadre (AA OPA);
- Approve and review staff products such as press releases, fact sheets, remarks, Web text and flyers that come from already-approved content (Field PIO or PAD);
- Oversee information verification and coordination of all materials for release (Field PIO, HQ EOC PIO, NIC, OGC);
- Coordinate with HQ EOC Environmental Unit, program communication offices, and the Field PIO on development and approval of products related to data (EOC PIO); and
- Coordinate with the public affairs official for the lead federal agency conducting the investigation of any incident-specific information, particularly terrorism-related information or information related to criminal investigations into the cause of the incident (HQ EOC PIO, Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics, and Training public affairs officials, HQ EOC Environmental Unit, Regional PAD, and Field PIO).

4.2 Communication of Environmental Data

Environmental data is defined as scientific sampling and monitoring data related to the incident, which includes but is not limited to soil, sediment, air and water. In response to a nationally significant incident, environmental data must be disseminated to the public in an understandable, timely, accurate and consistent manner. Once the data have been evaluated, validated and interpreted, the HQ EOC Environmental Unit will work with the HQ EOC PIO to prepare materials that present the data in easily understood language and in formats easily accessible to the public (e.g., Web). The HQ EOC PIO, working with the Environmental Unit, will present environmental data in an appropriate context with the appropriate technical caveats noted in plain language. The HQ EOC PIO will work closely with the REOC PIO, the Field PIO and the PAD on the dissemination of environmental data related products. All data-related materials must follow the established “review, approve, release” process. The review and

release of environmental data will be coordinated with other agencies (federal, state and local) as appropriate.

5.0 Vehicles for EPA Communication with the Public

5.1 Spokespersons

During a nationally significant incident, the AA OPA, in coordination with the PAD and Field PIO, will designate a spokesperson(s) to represent the EPA. Through an authorized spokesperson(s), EPA will respond in a timely manner to all media requests for information, interviews and visual imagery. Significant policy statements and potentially sensitive materials will follow the “review, approve, release” process. These materials will be fully coordinated with EPA Program Offices at the HQ and regional levels, with the affected state and local environmental agencies and with any federal partners such as natural resource and human health agencies before release. Urgent, incident-specific information related to the immediate protection of life and health may be released with the sole approval of the regional PAD or Field PIO. Incident Command Post and JIC news releases and media advisories, such as those that provide information on the JIC location or the timing of a news conference, may be released with the sole approval of the regional PAD or Field PIO.

Official EPA spokesperson(s) will address policy and programmatic issues. The Field PIO is responsible for working with EPA field response personnel to prepare them for potential interviews with the media.

5.2 Internet

The Web site development will be done in coordination with OEI, the DHS Web team, and the relevant Regional PADs and HQ program offices. In the event of a nationally significant incident, HQ OPA will develop and maintain one Web site to keep the public informed of the incident status. All approved content and data will be posted to the Web site as quickly as possible. All Web content will follow the “review, approve, release” process and meet EPA and federal standards. HQ OPA will incorporate the Regional and national Web content into a single EPA Web site.

5.2.1 National Content Source

HQ OPA, working with the HQ EOC PIO, the EPA ESF-15 Representative to DHS, the Regional PAD, and relevant HQ program offices, will develop national Web content that is consistent with Agency messages and other products created during the incident. This Web content will then be forwarded to HQ OPA for posting.

5.2.2 Regional Content Source

The Regional PAD, working with the HQ EOC PIO, HQ OPA, and relevant HQ offices, will develop Regional Web content that is consistent with Agency messages and other products created during the incident.

5.2.3 Incident Web Site Access and Postings

At the direction of HQ OPA, Regional and HQ office staff could be given rights to post content that has been reviewed and approved by HQ OPA to the incident Web site. HQ OPA will manage the Web site, including materials developed under section 5.2.2, coordinating postings and approvals. This Web site will include all information regarding the incident or disaster. OEI will support this process with technical assistance such as rights to redundant access.

5.2.4 Link Development

The Web site will include any applicable links to other information related to the incident or disaster on other Web sites, including responsible parties, industry groups, federal agencies, municipal, tribal, local and state partners. External links will be considered under Agency external links procedures.

HQ OPA will provide Regional staff with link text and URLs so that Regional Web pages can point to the incident Web site. Each relevant Regional office and program office will include these links on its respective home page.

5.2.5 General Content Format

General communications content submitted for posting to the Web site must include text written in clear language. Any supporting data should include contextual information that explains the meaning of the data in clear language. HQ OPA will, for each incident, issue guidance describing the format(s) in which potential Web content should be provided. The submitter must also provide evidence of appropriate approvals and a time frame for posting.

5.2.6 Data, Context and Format

Data submitted for posting will - when possible - be posted to existing public EPA data interfaces (e.g. Cleanups in My Community) and on the EPA Web site, and linked to/from the incident Web site. HQ EOC PIO will work with the appropriate HQ offices, HQ OPA and/or HQ and Regional Environmental Units to prepare materials in easily understood language that includes the context of the data.

There may be times when environmental data will not be posted through existing EPA interfaces. OEI may be required to offer database support for such instances. In such instances, the HQ EOC PIO will work with the HQ Environmental Unit to provide a consistent format and accompanying text as above. The format of the content will be determined jointly by the Leadership Cadre and the HQ and Regional Environmental Units.

5.3 Community Outreach

Community outreach is a vital component of the Agency's overarching communications strategy (EPA Memorandum, 2006). Community relations enable the Agency to determine what environmental messages are important to the public and if key messages are being disseminated to the public in an understandable, timely, accurate and consistent manner. Agency credibility depends on coordinated community relations and media efforts. Additional staff that may be required to carry out community outreach activities will be provided through EPA's Response Support Corps.

The Field PIO manages and coordinates a spectrum of public information activities, including community outreach activities, message strategies, and multi-lingual and cultural issues. This includes outreach to vulnerable populations during the course of the response, in collaboration with the Liaison Officer. EPA will coordinate community outreach activities with other Agencies through the JIC. All public outreach materials must follow the established "review, approve, release" process.

6.0 Coordinating of Public Information with our Partners

6.1 Interagency Coordination with DHS under ESF-15 – External Affairs Annex

During a nationally significant incident, ESF-15 ensures that sufficient federal external resources are assigned in order to ensure a coordinated federal response and provide accurate, coordinated and timely information to affected audiences, including governments, media, the private sector and the public. For this reason, in any nationally significant incident that has triggered activation of this Crisis Communications Plan, EPA will assign an ESF-15 Representative to DHS to serve on EPA's Leadership Cadre to ensure that EPA's messaging and information efforts are coordinated through the national response effort.

Additionally, upon activation of ESF-15 by DHS, federal external affairs resources will be employed to conduct sustained operations in support of the Principal Federal Official, Federal Coordinating Officer and Joint Field Office. Upon request of the DHS ESF-15 Director, EPA through its field and regional incident management will support the inter-agency effort under ESF-15 by providing the media and the public with information on EPA's response activities. EPA will deploy public affairs personnel to the JIC or other ESF-15 functions of an incident in support of these activities.

After DHS determines that ESF-15 and a National JIC should be stood up, PIOs from responding organizations will work together in the JIC to provide coordinated and consistent information about the incident to the media. EPA PIOs working in the JIC will be responsible for working on all issues raised to the JIC and not just those related to environmental or EPA-specific matters. DHS will coordinate the release of all written material on the incident, including press releases and fact sheets. After obtaining proper approvals for this information, as described in this Plan, subject information will be released to the media and public through the JIC. In many cases, the press releases issued can include information provided by many agencies involved in the response, including EPA.

All EPA materials will follow the EPA internal "review, approve, release" process. Once the information is approved for release, it will be funneled through the JIC for release as part of the coordinated federal response. The purpose of this coordination is to ensure the federal government is speaking with one voice.

6.2 State and Tribal Agency and Trust Territory Coordination

The Agency will coordinate the release of data and information with the affected states, tribes, local and trust territories.

The Field PIO will negotiate with the state, tribal, local and trust territory agencies to develop the incident-specific process for release of state data and information.

7.0 Training for Crisis Communications

EPA employees must complete the following courses before they can provide public affairs support to response operations as specified herein

- ICS 700/800, and
- ICS 100/200.

EPA employees must complete the following course before they can serve as a PIO as specified herein:

- ICS 300/400.

EPA employees must complete the following course before they can serve as a PIO on an IMT, as specified herein:

- ICS 403 - PIO position-specific training.

It is recommended that EPA employees complete the following supplemental courses:

- ICS 420 - Command and General Staff training, and
- FEMA's Public Affairs/ESF-15 Seminar (note: may be required for those employees serving in the JIC).

8.0 Staffing & Deployment

It is EPA's goal to develop the capability to staff up to five concurrent nationally significant incidents. All deployments will be coordinated with HQ EOC and the affected region and then with the back-up regions. When regional and back-up regional resources are exhausted, further deployments will be coordinated through HQ EOC and the affected region. During responses that exhaust regional office resources, additional resources will first be requested from their backup region(s), before pursuing resources from other regions. Requests and coordination will be made through the REOCs. Where there are multiple simultaneous incidents, or a significant precedent setting incident, the HQ EOC may coordinate these requests through the NICT with the REOCs and the RICTs. Depending on the complexity and duration of the incident or disaster, trained PIOs and PADs from the regional offices and HQ may be deployed to many locations, including the HQ EOC, the affected region(s), the ESF-10 Information Office in the field and the ESF-15

JIC. Subsequent rotations of individuals serving as Field PIO typically will be other PADs or other EPA public affairs staff with the appropriate training and experience. The Field PIO will be in the best position to assess field needs once the response is underway. If staff is needed from other regions to fill in for regional staff deployed to an incident, then these resource requests would be outside of the scope of the response and handled independently.

9.0 Standing Crisis Communications Workgroup

An EPA Crisis Communications Workgroup is hereby established and its members are charged with the responsibility to maintain and further the intent and value of this Crisis Communications Plan. The Workgroup shall meet on a regular basis, as necessary, to maintain the Plan, and further the goals of ensuring that EPA provides timely and accurate information during a response to a nationally significant incident.

The Crisis Communications Workgroup will ensure review and update of EPA's Crisis Communications Plan as appropriate.

In addition to maintaining the Crisis Communication Plan, the Crisis Communications Workgroup is also responsible for the review and approval of all crisis-related products produced by program offices and Regions outside of a crisis situation. All fact sheets, FAQs, message maps, draft press releases, Web content, and any other materials intended for distribution inside or outside of the Agency during a crisis must be submitted to Product Review. Product Review will then forward the materials to the Crisis Communication Workgroup for review. The Crisis Communications Workgroup will ensure the products are reviewed and approved by OPA management and OGC and will be included as part of the Crisis Communication Resource Guide. This review will ensure consistent messaging and avoid the duplication of efforts across the Agency.

The following EPA Public Affairs Officials will serve as lead members of the Crisis Communications Workgroup:

- AA Office of Public Affairs, or designee
- Public Affairs Director from the Lead Region for Homeland Security, or their designee
- Public Affairs Director from the Lead Region for Superfund, or their designee
- Director of the Office of Emergency Management, or their designee

9.1 The Crisis Communications Resource Guide

The Crisis Communication Resource Guide (CCRG) complements the Crisis Communications Plan by providing PIOs with the tools and information needed to carry out their responsibilities in the field, Regional Emergency Operations Centers and the Headquarters Emergency Operations Center.

The CCRG will provide a single place on the internet (using a password protected site) where PIOs can go for consistent information that has been pre-approved for particular incidents. The CCRG is a “living” online warehouse of information that will be regularly updated as information needs are identified. Information in the CCRG is broken down, where appropriate, into various crisis scenarios including natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, volcanoes, and wild fires), radiological dispersion devices, and blister agents. More scenarios will be added as necessary.

10.0 Crisis Communications during Significant Regional Incidents

For significant incidents, such as floods, tornadoes and wild fires, contained within a single Region or across several Regions, it may not be necessary to activate the Crisis Communications Plan but Regional coordination with OPA HQ will be necessary. During these incidents the OPA Science Advisor will be the primary contact to the Regional PAD to maintain situational awareness. The OPA Science Advisor will also be the primary liaison to the AA and DAA OPA as necessary. If NICCL calls are scheduled during the Regional incident, the OPA Science Advisor and EPA ESF-15 Representative to DHS will participate in these calls and will relay information back to OPA management and the Regional PAD as necessary. The Regional PAD will manage Web content development related to the incident, and will alert HQ OPA Office of Web Communications as new content is approved and posted.

References

EPA Memorandum. November 2, 2006. "Incorporating Environmental Justice Considerations into EPA Disaster Preparedness and Response Procedures."

Acronyms

AA(s) – Assistant/Associate Administrator(s)
AA OPA – Associate Administrator for the Office of Public Affairs
AAA OPA—Assistant Associate Administrator for the Office of Public Affairs
DAA OPA – Deputy Associate Administrator for the Office of Public Affairs
DHS – Department of Homeland Security
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency
ESF – Emergency Support Function
HQ EOC – Headquarters Emergency Operations Center
HQ EOC PIO – Headquarters Emergency Operations Center Public Information Officer
IC – Incident Commander
ICP – Incident Command Post
Field PIO – Incident Command Public Information Officer
IMT – Incident Management Team
IMT PIO – Incident Management Team Public Information Officer
JIC – Joint Information Center
NAR – National Approach to Response
NCP – National Contingency Plan
NICCL – National Incident Communications Conference Line
NICT – National Incident Coordination Team
NIMS – National Incident Management System
NRF --- National Response Framework
OEI – Office of Environmental Information
OEM – Office of Emergency Response
OGC – Office of General Counsel
OPA – Office of Public Affairs
ORD – Office of Research and Development
PAD – Public Affairs Director
PCC – Policy Coordinating Committee
PIO(s) – Public Information Officer(s)
REOC PIO – Regional Operations Center Public Information Officer
RA(s) – Regional Administrator(s)